

**To:** Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]  
**From:** Grantham, Nancy  
**Sent:** Thur 4/14/2016 10:46:21 PM  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT: ACTION: Daily Caller; Bonita Peak Mining District HRS; DEADLINE 6 EST

Perfecdt ..thanks ng

**From:** Hull, George  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 6:42 PM  
**To:** Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: URGENT: ACTION: Daily Caller; Bonita Peak Mining District HRS; DEADLINE 6 EST

Looks good to me, if this is the most recent info. Let me know if I can send to the reporter. -  
George

**From:** Peterson, Cynthia  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 6:37 PM  
**To:** Miller, Johanna <Miller.Johanna@epa.gov>; Smith, Paula <Smith.Paula@epa.gov>  
**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; Lemon, Mollie <Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov>; McKean, Deborah <mckean.deborah@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT: ACTION: Daily Caller; Bonita Peak Mining District HRS; DEADLINE 6 EST

Here is the answer from the ComStrat

On September 1, 2015 CDPHE issued a fact sheet with the following statement: “ The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment recommends that eating trout from the Animas River at this time is considered safe. CDPHE analyzed fish tissue from rainbow and brown trout from the Animas River. Based on the limited samples available, most of the post (Gold King) event fish tissue analyzed showed metals below detectable levels and all results fall below risk screening levels. Because there is a potential for the fish to concentrate metals in their tissue over time, CDPHE and CPW will continue to monitor levels of metals in Animas River fish. New data will be analyzed and the results will be reported when available.”

CDPHE conducted a second sampling event in Mid-march to determine if additional metals uptake has occurred and laboratory results are pending.

Cynthia Peterson

Community Involvement Coordinator

Public Affairs and Community Involvement

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII

1595 Wynkoop St. (8OC-PAI)

Denver, CO 80202-1129

303-312-6879 -- direct dial

**From:** Miller, Johanna

**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 4:29 PM

**To:** Smith, Paula <[Smith.Paula@epa.gov](mailto:Smith.Paula@epa.gov)>

**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy <[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov](mailto:Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov)>; Hull, George <[Hull.George@epa.gov](mailto:Hull.George@epa.gov)>; Lemon, Mollie <[Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov](mailto:Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov)>; McKean, Deborah <[mckean.deborah@epa.gov](mailto:mckean.deborah@epa.gov)>; Peterson, Cynthia <[Peterson.Cynthia@epa.gov](mailto:Peterson.Cynthia@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: URGENT: ACTION: Daily Caller; Bonita Peak Mining District HRS; DEADLINE 6 EST

Paula on question 3 we had an answer in the comm strat about whether the fish are safe to eat - I don't have access to the com strat but hoping Cristy does. It essentially reference the statement that CDPHE has put out about the safety of fish and indicates they are continuing to assess.

Johanna

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 14, 2016, at 3:55 PM, Smith, Paula <[Smith.Paula@epa.gov](mailto:Smith.Paula@epa.gov)> wrote:

Johanna-Urgent questions from an HQ area reporter with urgent deadline. Here's what we've got so far from Rob. Deb working on #2 and 3. Can you look at #1 to see if there's

anything you would add?

**From:** Ethan Barton [mailto:[ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org](mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 2:25 PM  
**To:** Press <[Press@epa.gov](mailto:Press@epa.gov)>; Lemon, Mollie <[Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov](mailto:Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Bonita Peak Mining District HRS

Here's the link to the HRS document, for your convenience:

<https://semspub.epa.gov/work/08/1769520.pdf>

On Thu, Apr 14, 2016 at 2:24 PM, Ethan Barton <[ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org](mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)> wrote:

Hello,

I have some questions regarding the Bonita Peak Mining District HRS Documentation Record.

I would like to know why the drinking water threat was not scored. The document shows that ground water migration pathway was not scored because of the low population density and because there are "no municipal wells located within the four mile radius that serve as potable supplies."

However, Silverton, Colorado, Farmington, New Mexico, and the Navajo Nation have all had their water supplies affected by the Gold King Mine release, which suggests water supplies are, in fact, impacted by the Bonita Peak Mining District.

Additionally, both the human food chain and the environmental threats scored the max values. How is it that the EPA claims the river is safe for humans and that drinking water is not affected, yet the human food chain is heavily threatened?

Given the threat to the human food chain, have residents who live in the area who consume wildlife, such as fishers in Silverton, Colorado, been warned of this threat and been given guidance?

In sum:

1. Why was drinking water not assessed in the HRS, given the details provided?- Site assessment group

The Hazard Ranking System is not a risk assessment. It is a numerical screening model, prescribed by regulation, used to determine eligibility for the NPL. Using the HRS, EPA assigns certain points for various types of receptors actually or potentially impacted by hazardous substances for each evaluated pathway. For the Bonita Peak site, EPA evaluated the surface water pathway and, using the HRS, documented that the site was eligible to be included on the NPL based on the presence of fisheries and a threatened species relative to the observed releases of hazardous substances at the site. A drinking water assessment was not necessary to document that the site was eligible for the NPL.

2. How can the human food chain be so heavily threatened, but the drinking water, as well as the Animas River, is safe for humans?

EPA is aware that hazardous constituents have been and continue to release to fisheries within the watershed, but it is unknown at this point the risks to the human food chain. Additional data collection is required before risks to the human food chain are understood.

3. Has the EPA warned local residents and provided guidance on the threat to the human food chain?

My deadline is end of business today.

Thanks,

Ethan

--

Ethan Barton

Investigative Reporter

Daily Caller News Foundation

410-829-1738

@ethanrbarton

--

Ethan Barton

Investigative Reporter

Daily Caller News Foundation

410-829-1738

@ethanrbarton